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New England District

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Corps issues permit to Cape Wind for scientific data tower in Nantucket Sound

CONCORD, Mass. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has made a determination today to issue a Section 10 permit to Cape Wind Associates to place a Scientific Measurement Devices Station (SMDS) and associated monitoring device on Horseshoe Shoals in Nantucket Sound off Cape Cod, Mass.

The permit application went under a thorough public and agency review process, said Karen Adams, Project Manager of the Cape Wind EIS in the Corps' New England District Regulatory Division. "We extended the public notice comment period in response to public requests. We also held public hearings on the data tower in Hyannis and on Martha's Vineyard in April 2002 to fully understand local concerns and issues."

As a result of the public involvement and agency review, the determination includes 16 special conditions as part of the five-year permit which the applicant must adhere to, including one requiring a bond posting.

Cape Wind Associates plans to install and maintain a pile-supported scientific measuring tower extending approximately 197 feet in the air above the mean lower low water elevation in the ocean waters of Horseshoe Shoals in Nantucket Sound as well as an associated measurement device imbedded in the sea floor.

The permit application is only for the installation of these scientific measuring devices to gather technical data and has no effect on the environmental review and permitting process for the entire Wind Farm project. The device to be imbedded in the ocean bottom, with a line connecting it to the tower, is located about 300 feet from the proposed data tower.

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Corps Permits Scientific Measurement Devices Station /2-2-2-2-2

“After careful review by the Army Corps of Engineers and other state and federal agencies, we have determined that this activity is permissible under our jurisdiction of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act,” said Christine Godfrey, the Corps’ New England District Regulatory Division chief. “Through review by Corps engineers and biologists in consultation with other Federal, State and local agency representatives, we have concluded that the proposed project will not impact navigation and have minimal impact on the marine environment. Our decision is as a result of our full National Environmental Policy Act compliance review. Additionally, the permit does not convey any property rights.”

These structures will be placed in Nantucket Sound but outside of Massachusetts’ waters. The ocean waters at this location are about 13 feet deep and the steel support pilings for this structure will be driven about 100 feet into the seabed. According to the applicant, these devices are intended to gather scientific data, including meteorological and oceanographic data, to evaluate the design and engineering criteria for a proposed wind energy project in this area of Horseshoe Shoals.

More information on Cape Wind’s proposed project and the Wind Farm EIS is available online at: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/>.